

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention

### What is the service?

- Title V MCH Block Grant funds and Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education funds provide teen pregnancy prevention services to youth of Washington through a variety of outreach and educational services. Abstinence Education funding provides information solely on abstinence and enhancing interpersonal communication, whereas Block Grant funds cover a wider range of topics including access to contraception, family planning methods, and youth development.

### Teen Pregnancy Prevention Projects

#### *Description:*

- High-risk youth receive family planning services, education, counseling, and mentoring through the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Projects. Youth are educated on topics ranging from HIV and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention to appropriate birth control and contraceptive methods to increasing parent-caregiver communication. These projects employ the youth development approach, which assumes that adolescents must develop basic competencies and skills to choose health-enhancing behaviors and become successful adults. The project sites are evaluated to determine efficacy and further enhance program designs specific to community needs and the target population.

#### *How/where provided*

- Implemented in five counties: King, Mason, Lewis, Okanogan and Grays Harbor
- Funding is provided to local family planning agencies, community-based organizations, and local health departments.

*Eligibility:* All youth ages 10-19 years old are eligible for services

#### *Target Audience*

- Approximately 350 youth clients were served through these projects. These projects are funded annually and last from August 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Abstinence-based Public Awareness Campaign**

### *Description*

- Campaign targets youth by encouraging them to not engage in sexual activity while emphasizing that parents of young teens should talk to their children about delaying sex. Qualitative data through statewide focus groups conducted with youth and parents in 2004 served as the foundation for media-based campaign messages. Pre and post test surveys of youth and parents will determine campaign effectiveness and allow for message enhancement.
- Media spots include two television spots for youth and one for parents. Youth spots encourage youth not to have sex, while the parent spot provides parents ways to talk to their children about delaying sex. Radio spots for parents and youth (translated into Spanish as well), are also aired in various radio stations throughout the state.
- The campaign timeline is April 18 through September 11, 2005 and spots are aired on various channels, including, but not limited to MTV, ABC Family, Cartoon Network, WB, NBC etc.

### *How/where service provided*

- The public awareness campaign is implemented statewide and target audiences have access to messages through television, radio, billboards, and cinema screen ads.

*Eligibility:* All youth ages 10-19 years old and their parents are eligible for services

### *Target Audience*

- Estimated audience: All youth ages 10 through 14 and parents of young teens are potential target audience for the campaign.
- Target areas include: Seattle/Tacoma which includes north to Bellingham, south to Olympia, west to the Olympic peninsula and east to Wenatchee; Southwest WA which includes Vancouver north to Olympia and East to Goldendale; Central WA which includes Yakima and the Tri-Cities; Eastern WA which includes Spokane, Walla Walla, Pullman, Colville, Moses Lake and north to the border.
- Billboard (June 1 to August 31) and Cinema screen (July 1 through July 31) ads are strategically placed throughout the state as well.
- Areas with billboards include, Anacortes (1), Aberdeen (2), Bremerton (2), Centralia/Chehalis (1), Ellensburg (1), Long Beach (1), Longview (1), Vancouver (3), Port Angeles (1), Colville (1), Newport (1). Cinema screen spots were bought in these areas: Walla Walla (12), Sunnyside (12), Yakima (20), Ellensburg (9), Pullman (8), Clarkston (12), Colville (1).

## **Abstinence-based Media Literacy Curriculum**

### *Description:*

- Sites implementing an abstinence-based media literacy curriculum targeting middle school youth were successfully evaluated through pilot testing in 2004. The current goal is to provide the same curriculum to communities and schools through a competitive process by fall 2005. The curriculum is a peer-to-peer program that enables youth to deconstruct various media messages, while encouraging them to abstain from sexual activity in order to avoid unintended pregnancy, STDs, and HIV.

### *How/where service provided*

- The media literacy curriculum will be implemented in 10 communities across the state. Curriculum training for youth will be provided by the University of Washington, College of Education.

*Eligibility:* All youth ages 10-19 years old are eligible for services

### *Target Audience*

- 532 youth participated in the media literacy curriculum in six pilot test sites across the state in 2004. Sites included Port Angeles, Spokane, Seattle, Yakima, Des Moines, Naches.
- Approximately 10 sites statewide will be funded in 2005, ranging from 10 to 40 participants per site.

## **Sexuality Education Guidelines**

### *Description*

- The January 2005 Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention created by the Department of Health and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provides a common framework for all educators and teachers providing comprehensive sexuality education to youth. While the voluntary guidelines promote abstinence as the safest method to avoid pregnancy and STDs, they also provide information on contraception for youth who choose to become sexually active.

*Eligibility:* All youth ages 10-19 years old are eligible for services

### *How/where service provided*

- Statewide

### *Target Audience*

- All health educators, teachers, and parents/caregivers are encouraged to use the Guidelines as a framework to teach comprehensive sexuality education.
- The Guidelines were distributed to all local health departments, Nursing Directors, local family planning agencies, tribal health programs, and all ESDs. Unfortunately, there is no way to track how many people or who is accessing the guidelines through our website.

## Issues/Concerns

- Nationally and within Washington State, abstinence education funding has been on the increase, whereas dollars for comprehensive services and education is limited. DOH also lost state funding in 2003 that partially supported teen pregnancy prevention projects across the state.
- The federal 8-part abstinence education definition is very limiting in its scope and only three out of the eight parts have any factual evidence behind them. DOH is particularly concerned, now that the program has been transferred from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to the Administration for Children and Families, that future program guidance might enforce equal emphasis on all eight parts of the abstinence education definition.
- Although teen pregnancy rates have been declining steadily over the last decade in Washington, there is concern over STD and HIV rates among the adolescent population and disparities across the state. Furthermore, there is no reliable statewide data in Washington to measure change in sexual activity. Data exist on teen pregnancies, births, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases. Reduction in teen pregnancy rates is a surrogate measure for sexual activity and is the indicator used to evaluate these programs.